



PRESS RELEASE

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Press office: +389 (0)2 308-0446

Cell phone: +389 (0)70 367 547

Email: bvelickovska@usaid.gov

USAID provides grants to Macedonian agribusinesses

On July 3rd USAID's AgBiz Program held a Grant Agreement Signing Ceremony to initiate export development projects for Macedonian agribusinesses working in the wine, fresh vegetable, processed vegetable and wild gathered product sectors. Attendees at the ceremony included representatives from USAID, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Supply, the Ministry of Economy, and the Macedonian consulting companies that helped assess the grantees' projects.

"Assisting individual agribusinesses to increase their competitiveness and productivity is an important way to open new markets, expand market share and create new jobs for Macedonian citizens," said USAID Mission Director Patricia Rader.

USAID's AgBiz Program provides a range of support to the firms that signed project implementation agreements at the ceremony. These projects will enhance the export competitiveness of the agribusinesses by supporting training, marketing activities, technical assistance, physical facilities expansion and advanced equipment acquisition. Most of the projects will support the businesses to move into value added products, develop or expand share in new export markets, expand processing or packing capacity and improve productivity.

The companies that signed grant agreements with USAID's AgBiz Program to support their competitiveness improvement and business expansion projects are "Badzo", "Lars", "Vipro", "Agros 2004", "Kokolanski", "Bonum Plus", "Avto Rita", "Dentina" and "Popova Kula". The export-focused projects that will be implemented by these companies will require a total investment of over USD 3.2 million and are projected to result in increased export sales of over USD 28 million by the end of 2010. USAID's AgBiz Program anticipates signing several more grants for export business expansion projects in the near future. For more information please visit www.agbiz.com.mk.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

The American people, through USAID, have invested nearly \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993. USAID is implementing projects that create jobs, reduce corruption, and prepare Macedonian students for the workforce. These initiatives improve the quality of life and support Macedonia's transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.